

# COVID-19

IN EDMONTON

We are all in the same storm...



Edmonton Vital Signs is an annual checkup conducted by Edmonton Community Foundation, in partnership with Edmonton Social Planning Council, to measure how the community is doing. Vital Topics are a quick but comprehensive look at issues that are timely and important to Edmonton.

Unless otherwise stated, "Edmonton" refers to Census Metropolitan Area and not solely the City of Edmonton.

**Disclaimer** – We have done our best to provide up-to-date information but the situation is changing rapidly. Wherever possible we have provided a date that is associated with when the facts occurred.

## COVID-19

An infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2. The World Health Organization (WHO) first learned of this virus on December 31, 2019. It reached Canada on January 27, 2020.

- Variants of SARS-CoV-2 appeared in Canada on December 26, 2020.
- Although more infectious, the vaccines are expected to be effective on the variants.

**PANDEMIC** – A worldwide occurrence affecting a large number of people. On March 11, 2020 the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic after 113,000 people world-wide were infected and more than 4,000 had died.

**VACCINES** – The first dose in Canada was given on December 14, 2020.

- The vaccines approved in Canada are **Pfizer-BioNTech** and **Moderna**.

## ... but in different boats.

Although more than half of Canadians report that the pandemic is having a significant impact on their households, the virus disproportionately affects marginalized communities.

## Ethnicity

**Visible minorities are at greater risk of COVID-19 due to higher poverty rates.** They are more likely to live in overcrowded housing and work in jobs with greater exposure to the virus.

*Note: much of the data collected on ethnicity is self-reported as the medical system does not regularly collect or report on ethnicity.*

### African, Black and Caribbean Canadians

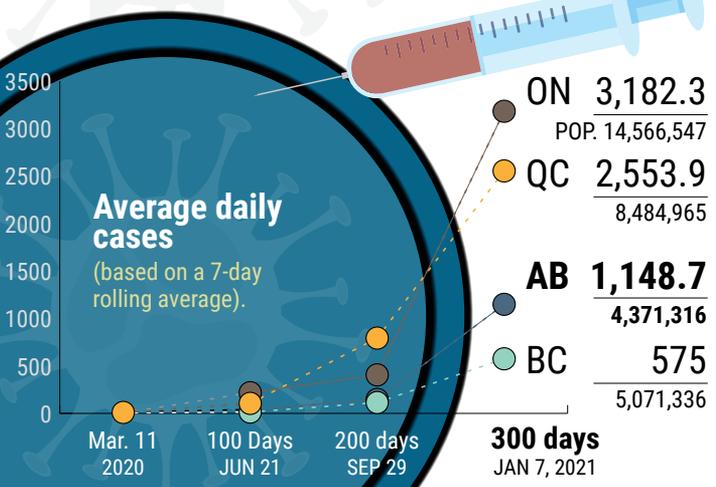
- Compared to the Canadian average, Black Canadians are more likely to report COVID-19 symptoms, and **3x as likely to know someone who has died.**
- **1.9x more likely to report difficulty paying rent.**
- 2.6x are more likely to experience food shortages.

### Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)

- **Report higher instances of COVID-19 (particularly Métis).**
- Indigenous Peoples are **2x as likely to report inability to pay rent** during the pandemic.
- First Nations people have a **high prevalence of underlying health conditions** that could increase severe outcomes of COVID-19.

### Asian Canadians

- People of South Asian heritage report higher instances of COVID-19.
- **Two of the largest outbreaks in Alberta were at two meat processing plants.**
  - 70% of Cargill's employees are of Filipino descent.
  - 33% of JBS employees are from East Africa, South Asia, and Latin America.
- **Police across Canada have reported an increase in hate crimes targeting Asian populations.**



**HIGHEST DAILY DEATH RATES** from COVID-19 Canada-wide:



## ECF@WORK

ECF in conjunction with individual donations, funds from the Provincial Government, and assistance from the Emergency Community Support Fund through the Federal Government, has issued well **over \$5 million to help charities.** Throughout this document you will see **ECF@Work**.

## Other Socioeconomic Factors

### Persons with disabilities

- More than 20% of Canadians have one or more disabilities.
- **36% reported losing work** (of the 66% that worked pre-pandemic).
  - **44% reported an impact on food** and 40% on personal protective equipment.
  - **71% reported impacts on their finances.**

### PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

- **76% were very concerned about managing their children's behaviours,** and anxiety compared with 57% of parents of children without disabilities.

*Socioeconomic factors continued on next page...*



**ECF@WORK** ECF has provided 24 grants to greater Edmonton organizations and charities in the amount of \$580,000 to assist seniors during the pandemic.

### Seniors

**CANADIANS OVER THE AGE OF 60 ACCOUNT FOR**

- **71%** of hospitalizations.
- **61%** of cases admitted to the Intensive Care Unit.
- **97%** of deaths.

**OF THE 118 REPORTED OUTBREAKS IN EDMONTON**

- (January 19, 2021):
- **29% were in long-term care facilities**
  - **44% were in supportive living/home living sites.**

**CO-MORBIDITIES** People with pre-existing chronic conditions are at higher risk of dying of COVID-19.

### LGBTQ2S+ Canadians

Pre-existing inequalities in financial and housing security have made LGBTQ2S+ individuals even more vulnerable during the pandemic.

- LGBTQ2S+ youth may be forced to isolate at home with phobic family members.

### Edmonton's homeless

Overall, the number of homeless in Edmonton has remained stable, however these numbers are expected to go up when the pandemic supports end.

In March 2020, Edmonton's homeless-serving sector opened a location for homeless to access services in a safe environment.

## Quality of Life

53% of Canadians report that the pandemic has had a strong impact on their quality of life.

- **14% live alone which means spending days with limited social contact.**
- 24% of women and 21% of men are caring for children all day.

In 2018, average life satisfaction among Canadians was 8.09 (0-10 scale). In June 2020, satisfaction declined to 6.71.

- **Satisfaction was lowest among those aged 15 to 29 and highest for those 60+.**
- Satisfaction was lowest among Asian-born immigrants.

## Food Security

**ECF@WORK** 55 grants > \$1.45 M to assist with food security.

In September 2020 Edmonton Food Bank reported that:

- **Home delivery for hampers was provided to 1,134 households between March and August 2020.**
- 46,807 individuals received a food hamper so far.

### Food Security Canada-wide

- **1 in 7 Canadians were estimated to live in a food-insecure household** in May 2020. Of households with children it rises to 1 in 5.

## The Economy

Many individuals have lost work due to the pandemic. According to Statistics Canada some groups reported higher unemployment rates:

- South Asian **17.8%** (South Asian women were at 20.4%)
- Arab **17.3%** • Black **16.8%** (18.6% for Black women)

### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT THE 100-DAY MARKERS

	JUNE (100 days)	SEPT. (200 days)	DEC. (Jan unavailable)
Edmonton	<b>15.8%*</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
Alberta	15.5%	11.7%	11.4%

\*Highest of all the major cities.

## Domestic Violence during the Pandemic

**ECF@WORK** 12 grants > \$290,000 towards stemming violence in the home.

- 10% of women and 6% of men in Canada are concerned about violence in their home during the pandemic.
- **Domestic violence-related calls to Edmonton police rose 16% in 2020.**

## Mental Health

**ECF@WORK** 110 grants > \$1.8 M to assist with mental health supports.

According to a June 2020 Leger poll Edmontonians stated that **friends and family were the thing that helped them most during the pandemic.**

- 59% of Canadians indicate that their mental health has been negatively affected by COVID-19, 66% among women.
- Only 1 in 5 have sought healthcare for their issues.

## Alcohol consumption

**1 in 5 Canadians say they are drinking more since the pandemic.**

21% drink at least once per day.

They say they drink more due to:

- **Stress and boredom (34%),**
- No regular schedule (29%)
- Loneliness (23%).

1 in 10 report drinking less.

## Record Opioid usage

Beginning in March 2020, opioid use began to increase significantly.

As of June 2020:

- **2.5 people were dying every day in Alberta due to Opioids.**
- **284 people died from fentanyl-related poisoning** (130 the previous quarter).
- There were **3,028 emergency and urgent care visits related to opioids and drug use** (2,472 the previous quarter).

## Fighting the storm...

### Becoming complacent

Only 3 months into the pandemic Canadians started to change their habits:

- **40% say they are not keeping extra personal space from others.**
- 57% say they are not staying away from public spaces.
- **70% of Albertans felt that the worst of COVID was over.**

### How are our medical professionals?

#### Infections among health care professionals

As of November 23, 2020, Alberta Health Services employees reported **2.66% had tested positive for COVID-19** including 2% of physicians.

#### Mental health among health care professionals

According to an on-going study by University of Alberta researcher Dr. Nicola Cherry:

- More than half the doctors now have very high levels of anxiety.
- Nurses and other healthcare workers have higher levels of depression.

### How you can help:

**Follow local guidelines** – Wear a mask when indoors with those outside your cohort. Stay home whenever possible. Wash your hands frequently. Adhere to all local guidelines.

**Check in on friends and family (safely)** – Text, phone, or video check-ins. Don't forget about the people you know who may be in quarantine.

**Support local** – Small businesses are being hit hardest by the pandemic. Shop online or call for curbside pick-up.

**Kindness counts** – Grocery store employees, delivery personnel, and especially medical professionals are stressed. Be kind and compassionate.

**Volunteer your time** (even online) [volunteerconnector.org](http://volunteerconnector.org)